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A Special Historical Study
USAFSS PERFORMANCE
DURING THE CUBAN CRISIS

Volume III

THE AFTERMATH:
PERMANENT OPERATIONS

RETURN TO THE
ESC HISTORICAL OFFICE



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A Special Historical Study

USAFSS PERFORMANCE DURING THE CUBAN CRISIS

Volume III

THE AFTERMATH: PERMANENT OPERATIONS

This material contains information affecting the national defense of the United States within the meaning of the Espionage Laws (Title 18, U.S. C., Sections 793, 794, and 798) the transmission or revelation of which in any manner to an unauthorized person is prohibited by law.

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FRONTISPIECE

"Is history the examination of past events
or is it the past events themselves?"

---E.H. Carr
Cambridge University

"The belief in a hard core of
historical facts existing independent-
ly of the interpretation of the historian,
is a preposterous fallacy but one that is
very hard to eradicate."

---E.H. Carr
Cambridge University

"What his imagination is to the poet, facts are to the
historian. His exercise of judgement comes in their
selection, his art in their arrangement. His method
is narrative. Narrative is the life-blood of history;
it is the vehicle that carries it, the medium through
which the historian communicates what he has to tell.
Macaulay said history should ideally be a compound
of poetry and philosophy. Today they argue whether
it is art or science. For myself I incline toward the
first of both these choices, but primarily I think of
the historian as a story-teller. His subject is the
story of man's past. His function is to make it known."

---Barbara W. Tuchman

(All of the quotations on this page were extracted from an article,
"Can History be Served up Hot?," which was printed in the Book Review
section of The New York Times, Vol LXIX--No. 10, March 8, 1964.
Mrs. Tuchman is the author of several volumes of history, most notably,
The Guns of August, an account of the early weeks of World War I, which
won a Pulitzer Prize in 1963.)

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FOREWORD

In late November 1962, Hq USAFSS and all the other major air commands received a message from Hq USAF which stated "This message constitutes official requirement under authorization of AFR 210-3, paragraph 2b(3), for submission to AFCHO (Air Force Historical Division Liaison Office) of data covering all significant actions taken by major commands and their subordinate organizations in response to the Cuban Crisis. . . ." Some of the specific requirements and instructions contained in the message were as follows:

. . . Commands which participated in significant actions to meet build-up of Soviet-Cuban military threat in Caribbean area should include specific data covering such actions. . . . There will be no restriction on classification of data. . . . Such data is required to provide Secretary of the Air Force, key Air Staff members, and major air commanders with comprehensive and authoritative record of quote Air Force performance during the Cuban Crisis unquote and more explicitly quote a complete, accurate, and timely record of planning, decisions, and actions unquote during the Cuban Crisis. . . .

Even before receiving this message, the USAFSS Historical Division already had begun work on the first volume of a special historical study of USAFSS activities during the Cuban Crisis. The USAFSS historians had learned from previous experience that such developments demand and deserve special attention precisely for the reasons and purposes outlined in the USAF message quoted above. However, the security classification necessary for almost all histories covering USAFSS operational activities prohibits distributing such documents

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outside the community. Yet, the role that USAFSS played in response to the Cuban Crisis was so significant and had such a direct bearing and influence on USAFSS operations that submission of a USAFSS history to Hq USAF (AFCHO) was mandatory if the full intent and purpose of the official historical requirement was to be met. Consequently--after extensive coordination throughout DCS/Operations and the personal review of General Klocko--an abbreviated and cursory account of USAFSS operations during the Cuban Crisis, with a "straight Top Secret" classification, was prepared and submitted to Hq USAF (AFCHO). However, the USAFSS historians prefaced the report with an explanation that a complete and detailed history of USAFSS activity during the crisis (with a more restrictive classification) would be submitted to the USAF Director of Intelligence (AFNICAC) and in that way would be available for use by the Air Staff. The USAFSS Historical Division also recommended that a member of the AFCHO staff obtain the necessary security clearance to review the USAFSS operational histories submitted to AFNICAC. This was important because the Cuban Crisis was just another example of several developments that had occurred in the past and would occur in the future in which review of the USAFSS histories would be necessary if the USAF Historical Division were to compile a complete history of Air Force actions.

This is the third, and perhaps final, volume of a special historical study of USAFSS activities related to the Cuban situation. Historical

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coverage of this activity in the future will be included in regular command histories and in the histories submitted by the USAFSS units in Florida. Since this is the final volume and since a year and a half have elapsed since the crisis began, an attempt has been made in the final chapter of the volume to provide an historical analysis of the developments as they affected the command.

The National Security Agency, the Service Cryptologic Agencies (SCA's), and the Air Force learned some valuable lessons as a result of the Cuban Crisis. Many of these are reflected in the narrative account of USAFSS operations contained in this and the two previous volumes. However, just as the USAFSS histories are essential for a complete and comprehensive history of the Air Force, so are the histories of the other SCA's (NSG and ASA) essential for a complete and comprehensive history of operations pertaining to Cuba and Latin America.

Some of the analyses and conclusions reflected in this volume may be premature and should be considered in light of possible future developments. Yet, several conclusions emerged as fact no matter what developed later. For example, what began initially and principally as an emergency operation to meet an immediate and perhaps one-time requirement, developed rapidly into a relatively large and permanent operation designed to meet a continuing requirement. That is,

coverage of Cuba and other Latin American countries--as a

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direct result of developments in Cuba--will not be "dropped" for years to come. Further, the need for an airborne capability to insure adequate coverage was proved so conclusively that specially equipped aircraft were programmed for the task. Other conclusions, not specifically drawn by the historian, will be obvious simply on the basis of the facts as recorded.

The Historical Division sincerely acknowledges the cooperation and support provided by personnel in DCS/Operations toward the successful completion of this historical study.

Comments, criticisms, and suggestions on this study are welcomed and should be addressed to the Historical Division, Hq USAFSS (COI-3), San Antonio, Texas.

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Chapter I

Growth of The ERU

(TS) As 1963 opened, USAFSS operations in Florida began to leave one phase and enter into another. The immediate requirement in the initial emergency reaction unit (ERU) operation (specifically in connection with ground operations at Cudjoe Key) was in support of SAC and TAC reconnaissance flights over Cuba. had been lacking when Major Rudolph was lost over Cuba in a U-2 in the early days of the declared crisis and this had been (and remained) the primary concern of operations. But since the facilities and sites were in operation, the National Security Agency (NSA) and high agencies in Washington naturally wanted to glean as much as physically possible from those facilities. This tended to put a considerable strain on the 6947th Scty Sqdn at Cudjoe Key, Fla., and its detachment at MacDill AFB in Tampa, several hundred miles away.

(TS) Throughout the months prior to the declaration of crisis by President Kennedy in late October, the operation had already made its mark. It was successful and lucrative enough for Washington to insist that the command put a severe strain on its world-wide airborne program to keep aircraft on the Cuban problem.

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It would be rather wishful thinking to say the ground operation was, at this juncture, as successful. Under the circumstances the ground station's performance was much more than creditable, but there were many things lacking that would have to be supplied before this unit became the solid contributor it would have to be. This, in truth, pertained to the entire structure of the service cryptologic agencies (SCA's)

More productive were needed (and programmed) for the Cudjoe Key site, and there was a continuing problem of priorities of the many different tasks assigned to the unit.

Operations No Longer Temporary

(TS Many things were uncertain. But the single clear certainty was the fact that operations in Florida were there to stay and, for that matter, the

Soviet Russia was firmly entrenched in the Western Hemisphere for the first time and the Reds were wasting no time making the picture as permanent and productive as possible. The U.S. blockade was finished. United States officials were apparently convinced that "offensive" weapons were no longer battle-ready in Cuba. Whether or not this was true

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was not clear from the material available to the command. Although many of the nation's leading newspapers published glowing phrases about the U.S. stand against Soviet Russia, there were mixed emotions among those who watched the developments very closely from start to finish. The optimistic were more or less represented by Marguerite Higgins in Washington, who reported on the last day of 1962:

. . . The Soviet Union, sensing weakness in the West, went on the offensive both in its stepped-up harassment of Berlin and its penetration of the Caribbean. With the Cuban confrontation, the offensive was stopped. . . .

But was it stopped? Secretary of State Dean Rusk put it this way: ". . . eyeball to eyeball, it was the Russians who blinked first." It was perhaps unfortunate that many people forgot one of the basic maneuvers of Communist subversive activities -- advance two steps, then if necessary, retreat one step. Hindsight is always more accurate than foresight, but the basic fact remained that such a "backdown" was not at all unique in Communist dealings with the West.

For example, even as Americans were applauding the "defeat" of the Soviets in their first direct confrontation of the U.S. in the Western Hemisphere, the Russians were plodding steadily forward. Before the year ended, Robert S. Allen and Paul Scott reported that Khrushchev was ". . . boldly continuing to strengthen Russian military

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forces in Cuba right under the cameras of our low-flying reconnaissance planes." They reported that five Soviet generals, including a top military expert in the handling and launching of strategic rockets, had set up a permanent headquarters on the island. The writers claimed that this information had been supplied to the inner ring of Washington policy-makers. Said the Allen-Scott report:

. . . of the five Soviet generals, the continued presence and activities in Cuba of General Dankevich (Lt. Gen. Pavil B. Dankevich, chief of staff of strategic rocket forces) are causing the greatest alarm among U.S. intelligence officers.

They warn that General Dankevich is staying on either because Khrushchev has strategic rockets hidden on the island, or because the Soviet leader is preparing to sneak back his missiles by submarine or surface ships in the near future.

"A missile expert with the reputation of General Dankevich isn't in Cuba just to learn the cha-cha-cha," reported an intelligence briefer at one high-level inter-administration meeting on Cuba. "He only appears with the big rockets or where they are about to show up."

Furthermore, the reports indicated that the Soviet high commander, General C. O. Slazenko, had assumed complete command of the entire Cuban force, including-to a degree at least-the supervision of Castro and his "Cuban cohorts."¹

(TS More significant as far as the Air Force and USAFSS were concerned,

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the command to program a continuing requirement for a requirement that was just as real as ever at the beginning of 1964, although the

Urgency Not Diminished

This was the situation when talks between UN Ambassador Adlai Stevenson and Russia's Vasily V. Kuznetsov broke down after the first week in January 1963. From 16,000 to 17,000 Soviet troops and technicians were estimated in Cuba. Russia side-stepped the on-site inspection issue in Cuba on the grounds that this was a U.S.-Cuba problem and not within the realm of Soviet jurisdiction. Khrushchev agreed to remove "offensive" weapons if the U. S. lifted its blockade against the island, But that was as far as it got. At that time, the UN Security Council talks were cut off and the matter considered closed as far as the international organization was concerned. Meanwhile, the U.S. had to tell other members of the Organization of American States (OAS) that there was ". . .no information that nuclear missiles and other offensive weapons still remain (ed) in Cuba. But there was no proof either that they (had) all been removed."²

(TS) So, some arguments to the contrary notwithstanding, the urgency to have permanent and maximum-producing operations in Florida was about the same. At Cudjoe Key, the

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command was already assuming the squadron would be permanent and probably enlarged. Plans for this were already in the first stages of implementation, with sights on an eventual 50-position operation which would come with the start of the third planned phase.³ Already the unit was covering the gamut:

All SCA's Expanding

(TS The planned buildup was not limited to USAFSS. All of the SCA's were scheduled to expand. On 21 February said the Naval Security Group (NSG) unit at Key West, Fla., would be enlarged to assume

Presumably, all

units were having growing pains; i.e., requirements were being levied based on planned growth before the growth took place. As an example, late in March,

at least it would be until the new operations facility was completed.

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And many times the assignments surpassed the installed position capability, requiring considerable shifting of the routines and positions. The new equipment wouldn't be in until the operations building was finished. If the demands were to be met, this would have to be done.⁵

(S) The buildup was not limited to the SCA's. Other actions and contemplated actions had to be kept under observance for the possibility of future interference. The command knew that any new facility, regardless of who built and operated it, had to have communications. Any concentration of communications facilities presented potential sources of interference. For example, early in March at Boca Chica Naval Air Station, a group of air defense officials discussed a site — for a time division data transmitter, part of the Semi-Automatic Ground Environment (SAGE) air defense system. At the same time the Navy discussed a communications improvement plan, which considered Saddlebunch Keys as a transmitter site for the communications. The transmitters would cover the frequency range in use by the Navy. The site was just six nautical miles from Cudjoe Key.⁶

Hope For Improved

(S) The squadron, in the meantime, was looking forward to the day when its new operations building would be ready. So much was possible if the equipment would meet the needs. This was particularly true in which had always been low at the

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Cudjoe Key site, although the initial site survey had showed it was potentially as good as Key West. This had not been true through the first three months of operation, but the unit attributed the difference to superior antennas at the Navy site. The squadron was to get these same antennas when the new facilities were finished. Again, however, manning came up as a possible problem area. When the positions

Forty

The

6940th SW at Goodfellow AFB was already in the midst of a training program for these people; with the final aim to supply personnel so the additional 10 could be dropped.⁷

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(TS) The national agency saw initially a three-station net: net control at the ASA site, Homestead, Fla. and positions at Eleuthera Island and Sabana Seca, Puerto Rico . This, NSA said, would require no extra positions. The agency had several other thoughts. First, it suggested that ASA replace the old at Eleuthera Island with new equipment as soon as possible. It added that NSA should supply operating space for ASA operations at Homestead (which might require modest construction) and Sevana Seca. Navy-manned positions at Homestead and Sevana Seca would eventually be cut. If this could not be done, ASA should install a at Homestead, with the Navy continuing to man the Caribbean net position in Puerto Rico.⁹

Services Ask For More

(TS) The Naval Security Group agreed that a Caribbean net should be formed and generally agreed with the NSA proposals. But NSG felt that NSA did not go far enough. NSG pointed out that with three stations, all would have to be 100 percent effective all the time; a situation that didn't figure to prevail. So NSG recommended at least one extra station for the network.¹⁰

(TS) The Army Security Agency offered the same objection to

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the three-station network, but had even more to worry about. It would have to supply the equipment for the operation; no mean task, as it turned out. Two weeks passed before ASA passed the first reply to NSA and this was simply an introduction, as ASA said ". . . logistical and operational aspects of establishing an effective must be considered prior to firm planning." Again it seemed that the national agency had failed to consider the equipmental entanglements possibly at hand.¹¹

(TS) The Army agency readily admitted that the should be a definite improvement over the -but there were none available from within Army resources at the time. As to the net itself, the Army agreed with the Navy that the three-station arrangement allowed no measure of error or breakdown. Said ASA;

. . . A three-station net is seldom if ever satisfactory for purposes. One response to a mission, one station out of service, a garbled flash, and so forth will result in only a ". The proposed three-station net is in effect a two-station net since

In view of this, consideration should be given to establishing sites, in addition to Homestead and Eleuthera Island, at the following locations in order of technical desirability:

To begin with, ASA suggested that NSA first launch a month-long operation at Cololi, Canal Zone, using the installed in support of the effort. ASA explained that:¹³

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. . . Initial results from this installation are encouraging; however, consider a minimum 30-day operational test essential for conclusive results. Investigation of installation will be dependent on operational results from Cololi.

The test was to take place early in April.

USAFSS Not Included in Net Plans

(S) USAFSS agreed that improvement in was needed, but throughout the NSA-NSG-ASA negotiations the only mention of USAFSS's Cudjoe Key site was as a with the associated responsibility of establishing communications when the net went into operation. This, however, would leave the command without a capability of its own.* The USAFSS position was that within a couple of years its requirement would increase along with mission development. But in the initial dealings, all plans were made on the development of the Navy

This was not expected until later, but the initial concept had ASA operating a position at Homestead, Puerto Rico, and the Canal Zone. USAFSS had none of its own.¹⁴

(S) Though the existing arrangement was satisfactory at the moment, the command went ahead with its efforts to become a part

* In many parts of the world, USAFSS used facilities operated by the other SCA's. There was no issue of non-cooperation on the parts of the owners, but under any circumstance where use of the facilities would cause a conflict, certainly the tenant unit at the site would have to be in second priority. This had caused considerable difficulty in the past.

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of the network. In early April it started planning for USAFSS positions at feeling that "... anticipated increases in no doubt (would) limit USAFSS ability to obtain needed support unless we act now." USAFSS stated specifically that:¹⁵

... In view of the changing military and political situation in Central and South America, there is an anticipated operational requirement for an AFSS capability in support of the effort at the 6947th Scty Sqdn, 6945th RSM, and such other AFSS units as may be established. Currently, the 6945th RSM and 6947th Scty Sqdn are tasked with During the 1965 time frame it is believed that there will be an appreciable increase in activity in areas of AFSS interest; i.e.,

Personnel Again Critical

(TS) This development was more or less indicative of the general tenor which surrounded the building progress among all SCA's involved in the Latin America problem in general and the Cuba problem in particular. The operation had started six months before on the basis of using a handful of but it already was beginning to reach giant proportions in the minds of planners and operators.

(S) The personnel shortage among was already at hand, and as mission requirements continued to expand-particularly national as opposed to the responsibilities of earlier days-the shortage extended to the operations officers. This became a touchy situation during non-duty hours because the

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operations officer on duty was actually commander of the site. With the critical mission assigned, this became quite a responsibility. In May, the squadron said:¹⁶

. . . The mission of the 6947th Scty Sqdn required the reporting of vital information to consumers at the highest level. Also to provide inflight support to U.S. aircraft engaged in highly sensitive flights. The flight commander is charged with the release of this vital information and daily is faced with making decisions which if faulty or improper could be both embarrassing to this command and damaging to the best interests of the United States. Further during other than duty hours the flight commander is the representative of the unit commander at the operating location which is some 30 miles from the living area where the commander and his staff officers reside. He is therefore often solely responsible for making the decision as to what action should be taken on all incoming. . . messages.

(TS Through all of these developments, the squadron was trying to do its job with what was available. Of primary concern there, as well as at nearly every other ground station, was

Unfortunately, the Cudjoe Key station was highly lacking in this respect. The Navy station at Key West was having more success than the USAFSS operation, but officials at the site said this resulted primarily from superior Navy antennas rather than from location of the site itself. USAFSS kept trying to come up with the needed equipment and facilities. But, as in so many cases when dealing with equipment that was not readily available, schedules became crossed up on occasions. Better antennas were already in the program, but these were not to be ready until September.¹⁷

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(TS Operations people at the site felt that the partial success up to that point indicated that some could be satisfactorily with improved antennas. However, further testing was required before they could determine just what configuration was needed. Meanwhile, the command had procured to go along with the anticipated antenna configuration. Again, however, fluctuating schedules almost caused a difficulty as the middle of the year approached. Space at Cudjoe Key was at a premium and facilities were at a premium, so it was necessary to get all components of an installation together at just about the same time. Without the antennas only one could be justified, so the command managed to slip the delivery of the rest to head off constriction.¹⁸

(TS) The squadron felt that equipment could be used to

which might later appear.

But every day the squadron grew more apprehensive about all of the requirements it was receiving. For example, there were several radio positions scheduled for the 6947th Scty Sqdn which operations people felt should be installed at Goodfellow AFB, Tex. These were to be The unit recommended that this change take place.¹⁹

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No Slowdown Seen in Cuba

(TS) Despite many glowing accounts of a Soviet about-face in the Caribbean, the

Several previous introductions of highly sophisticated bore this out. And progress had by no means stopped. On 23 May 1963,

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(TS As the efforts continued to keep up with
the squadron, along with ASA and NSG, continued a
series of . By early May they were finished, and
there were several points worthy of consideration. The Navy said
Opalocka, Fla., showed better possibilities than other
areas in the state. Despite this opinion, however, NSG still considered
Homestead to be the preferred site for permanent operations,
so this recommendation was sent on to Washington. The squadron had
already run a comparative test between Cudjoe Key and Key West and
found little difference in between the two. But with
everything considered, it had chosen the Cudjoe Key site. Many
things were pointing toward a permanent ground site, but the Keys
were still needed for specific requirements.²²

(TS Meanwhile, the squadron was becoming more and more

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involved in to varying degrees. On 10 July asked
CINCLANT for authority for the

Tighter Coordination Needed

(S) was the squadron's primary mission but it
was having trouble keeping up with where the
were at all times, as opposed to where they should be. One of the
primary points as far as USAFSS was concerned was keeping the

To check just where it stood, the 6940th SW, between the
2nd and 6th of July 1963, sent two representatives to the squadron to
test monitor operations of SAC communications
between the aircraft and the reconnaissance control center. They
discovered several difficulties.

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(S) For awhile the
from Boca Chica. Suddenly this was discontinued, for reasons the
command didn't learn about for some time. In the meantime, USAFSS
needed an answer. The information at the many times did
not agree with that
The command originally wanted to put a man in the who could

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television, additional KY-8 voice, or any other means to get the information.²⁶

(S) It wasn't until early August that the command found out why the

There

was no firm settlement at the end of 1963, however.²⁷

Progress

(TS) In the meantime, NSA was continuing with its efforts

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Chapter II

The Growth of the Mission

(TS) Since its inception in October 1962, the USAFSS operations in Florida had been primarily in support of

Just how this was evaluated was difficult to determine because the command got only sporadic reports from the

On 8 July 1963, the squadron got its first indication that it would begin moving into the prime was ready to turn over

However, many things had to be done before the unit was ready.¹

(TS) There were many considerations in accepting this new responsibility. Most important were space and people. However, the command had a bit more time to work than usual, because this time had agreed to take up the slack. Eighteen new people were needed. Four of these were already available and experienced -- two were for and two for

They were at and had been working the problem at that level. The others--two for

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of these were available from the 6940th Scty Wg at Goodfellow AFB, and another was assigned to the AFSCC.²

(S , Before there could be any changes in personnel, the manpower positions themselves would have to be transferred from the various places to the 6947th Scty Sqdn. While this was an administrative matter, it took time. The first unit to be tapped was the 6901st Special Communications Group (SGC) in Germany, which had recently had part of its reporting responsibility transferred to the 6910th Scty Wg.* This provided four spaces for the squadron.³ In the meantime, personnel officials at USAFSS had earmarked 11 overseas personnel for the Florida assignments. All were scheduled to return to the United States by September 1963--well in time for the other arrangements to be made.⁴

Sets Down Procedures

(TS) On 18 September, alerted the command for the start of the new job but reiterated its position that all be ready before the change was made. The national agency outlined procedures as follows:

* In Europe, as the rest of the world, there had been a (cont'd)

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(cont'd) continuing trend toward mechanization and automation in data processing. At this time the AN/GLR-1 installation was just about complete at the 6915th Scty Sqdn, Hof, Germany, a subordinate unit of the 6910th Scty Wg, Darmstadt, and presumably accounted for the spare analysts at the 6910th SCG.

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of operation would be similar to the above except the processing unit would get its material from Homestead and

(S) This was obviously a pretty large order, and pointed to the second of the two problems facing the small unit in Florida--space. By August 1963, well less than a year following the deployment of the ERU, the unit had grown from a half-dozen positions to 25. This was nine less than the number authorized. All of the manned positions were operated 24 hours a day. These included

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25

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and 2

positions.⁶

Enlarged _____ Organization

(S) There also were plans to develop at COMKEYWESTFOR/JARCC and the Montgomery Air Defense Sector (MOADS). In June proposed procedures for a new JARCC special intelligence office and the enlarged AFSSO at MOADS. It was news to USAFSS and another instance of the command learning about 6947th Scty Sqdn operations "after the fact." At the time,

This, though relatively fast, took two or three minutes from time of from the squadron.⁷

(S) The national agency recommended the squadron eliminate the

The agency felt that ". . . in addition to being more timely, the information would be more accurate, since errors are frequently made in the rapid conversion process."⁸ acknowledged the fact that more voice circuits would be needed and added that ". . . USAFSS analysts would also have to be located at

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the JARCC and MOADS facilities since

The provision of additional analysts, in itself, was considered a major problem by USAFSS.

(S Just a few days later, USAF echoed the command's position that the move should not be made. The Pentagon said ". . .

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Squadron Gets _____ Mission

(S Since the beginning of the Cuban crisis, all units in the area had

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(S) The Navy disagreed with the proposal. Said CINCLANT:¹¹

(S) But NSA insisted that the move be made to save equipment. The agency said the proposal did not ". . . imply a modification of (CINCLANT operations orders) but was initiated as a direct result of observation of units' capabilities to effectively participate in programs and review of missions in an attempt to better utilize available resources on this problem." The agency stressed that the move in no way affected communications, codes, or personnel, as had been intimated by CINCLANT in its disagreement.¹²

(S) NSA went on to say it inspected all of the under its control continually so they could be used as completely as possible to fulfill ". . ."

After examining the 6947th

Scty Sqdn, Key West Naval Station, and

, it was decided

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that Key West would need personnel to
handle an effective program. This, along with
duplication of 6947th Scty Sqdn coverage of
would be needed to perform even a limited part of the
same functions. Such an assignment, felt, would be
". . . most un-economical." ¹³

Navy Unique

The small site, crowded as it was and in a number of
cases scantily-manned, managed to do very well for itself in this

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respect. In October, which was a fairly busy four-week period, it produced:

Breaks For _____

(TS , Two events in October gave opportunities for

(a) Hurricane Flora early

in October and (b)

On 7 October 1963,

_____ told the squadron:¹⁶

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community itself went on hurricane alert although no drastic measures were needed. In Cuba, the damage to lives, crops, and livestock was extensive, as was later reported to the world by Castro.

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Facilities Don't

(TS) Through the rest of 1963 the squadron continued jamming its requirements into the too-short-days and too-little-space operational atmosphere. The buildup over the year and a few months from the initiation of the emergency had been noteworthy to say the least. The site still had to be considered of an emergency nature as far as facilities were concerned, particularly in regard to buildings, working space, and conditions. This would prevail until the new operations building was complete and some of its responsibilities transferred elsewhere.

(TS) Under any circumstances, the unit knew it could do only part of the job of completely covering the The

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(TS Two hundred miles to the north of the Keys, in Tampa, the small airborne detachment of the squadron had been involved in a strict continuation of its crisis operations. There still weren't enough aircraft to do the job comfortably. There was still the constant shifting of C-130's in an attempt to get something permanently established so that it, too, could settle down to a routine operation. This had begun to settle toward the end of 1963, but there was much more to be done before anything approaching a routine could be put together. These developments are discussed in the chapter following.

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Chapter III

Airborne Operations

(TS) By the beginning of 1963, operations, from a procedural and organizational standpoint, had reached more or less a routine. However, the routine didn't extend to the equipment and means. Aircraft was, and continued to be, the principal difficulty. The requirement had to be satisfied, of course, but it caused a continuing drain on the resources of Pacific Air Force as long as the SUN VALLEY and STRAWBRIDGE aircraft were flying from Florida.* By the beginning of 1963, everyone agreed that the requirement would exist for some time. USAFSS had been fighting for new aircraft for the assignment for several months. But there was nothing definite on the possibility at the start of 1963. This left, as the most acceptable alternative, the TALL TOM C-130B, which had been the subject of so much discussion in the past.

TALL TOM Modification Needed

(TS , The command knew that the aircraft would have to be modified to be adaptable to the problem. First was the capability of --a consideration that was even more imperative in where the aircraft was The TALL TOM (AN-ULD-1) system was designed to take advantage of multi-position with a minimum number of operators) and a complete associated ground processing system. But

* For illustrations of these configurations, see Vol I, "Cuban Crisis."

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for

(TS) Retaining the PACAF aircraft in Florida led to continuing discussions, and the Pacific command certainly suffered to a certain degree from its loss. On the other hand, Cuba was of the most immediate interest to the U.S. So, that's where the priority lay. A point arose that showed the difficulties involved in the necessity of USAFSS handling the mission equipment on an aircraft owned by another command -- in this case Tactical Air Command (TAC).

TAC had ordered a technical order modification (TOC) on all C-130 aircraft, calling in part for the installation of a liquid oxygen (LOX) system. But the unique configuration of the equipment in the aircraft, its classification in particular, created difficulties. To complete the TOC, TAC would have to get into the mission equipment of the aircraft for the LOX modification.

(TS) Unfortunately, the tactical command was not able to do this because the arrangement of the equipment, and the equipment itself, was completely unique to USAFSS. USAFSS, knowing that a considerable hassle might develop, told TAC on 2 January 1963 that the existing oxygen system was all right as far as it was concerned. It explained that if something happened at high altitude the

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aircraft could be brought down to a safe height without particular effect on the mission.¹

TEMCO Gets Job

(TS) The next day TAC confirmed that it could not include the job in its BIG SAFARI* maintenance modification program and that TALL TOM would have to be taken to TEMCO† for the job. This brought up another problem -- money -- that was several months in solving. Under the BIG SAFARI program, the cost of the modification would have been taken care of by bulk funds for the project, but with TEMCO doing the job, the money had to be authorized by Hq USAF. Although the Pentagon knew of the problem, there had been no funding action at that point.²

PACAF Still Hurt

(TS) In the meantime, PACAF continued to show its displeasure with the prolonged absence of its aircraft because it was so pressed with its own program. On 12 January PacSctyRgn received from 5th Air Force a complaint which appeared to substantiate a claim that the C-130's weren't being fully utilized. Whether it was by accident or design was never established, but the figures used

* BIG SAFARI was the code name assigned to the TAC-wide program of TOC in connection with C-130 aircraft. The LOX problem was only part of the program.

† The TEMCO Corp. was located in Greenville, Tex., and in the past had done most of the special equipment design and installation for the USAFSS program.

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by 5th Air Force had been taken out of context in a utilization report and did appear quite damaging. Fifth Air Force said that around Christmas 1962 several days passed without the aircraft being flown. This was indeed true, but it stemmed from operational developments in rather than any design by the command to hold them on the ground. Under the schedule in effect, USAFSS flew on even number days and the Navy flew on the odd-number days. In this particular instance, TAC had grounded all aircraft on 24 and 26 December because of contamination found in JP-4 jet fuel. Under any circumstances, the two aircraft were on a regular schedule of 150 hours a month. The normal C-130 utilization was for 80 hours per month per aircraft. The command also was called on, regularly, to support specific SAC flights on the odd-number days when the Navy was flying the schedule.³

(TS , Under any circumstances, the TOC program had to go on, and the command was worried that it might come up with no aircraft to fly during that time. USAFSS had been pressuring TAC, through Hq USAF, to get TALL TOM in commission to take up the slack while the SUN VALLEY and STRAWBRIDGE C-130's were in scheduled maintenance. TAC assured USAF and USAFSS that it would have TALL TOM in commission for this support. Though this was the best USAFSS could expect, it was not a completely acceptable solution; because until TALL TOM was modified to a more

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efficient configuration for operations, it was not all that was needed. A concurrent problem was maintenance of the ULD-1 equipment. The command had four maintenance men assigned to the detachment, and this was enough for the limited mission flying the aircraft was doing at the time. But to make it able to fly regular

mission schedules, four more maintenance men were needed-- and these had to come from Europe, where the aircraft and system had initially undergone service operational testing earlier in 1962.⁴

Ready Date Set

(S On 29 January, USAF told the command that TALL TOM would be ready to fly on 6 February, so USAFSS hurriedly sent word to EurSctyRgn to send the four ULD-1 maintenance men back to MacDill AFB on temporary duty. This was a fairly expensive move, but the command felt obligated to use the aircraft as much as possible in view of the pressure it had put on TAC to make it available.⁵ TALL TOM could take care of the normal requirements, but the

For this the

STRAWBRIDGE had this capability, but TALL TOM did not.⁶

EurSctyRgn Must Pay Bill

(TS European Security Region, which had been involved

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in one way or another with the Cuban problem since the beginning, told the command that its TDY money was running short. It asked USAFSS, therefore, for authority to send the men back to the U.S. permanently. But the command, which was having its own troubles in this respect, told the region headquarters it would have to take care of this item itself.⁷ On 1 February, TAC told the command that TALL TOM wouldn't be ready to fly until the 15th of the month and USAFSS told EurSctyRgn to hold the ULD-1 people until the 12th.⁸

(TS The command's urgency for having this aircraft was made clear when it was considered how difficult it would be to use TALL TOM at all. Mission equipment maintenance ~~has~~ already been mentioned. Then there was maintenance of the aircraft itself. Although it would be limited in its performance, the plane still needed maintenance. Then there was the recommended reconfiguration of the aircraft to make it fit Cuban problem needs. The 6940th Scty Wg, which was the parent unit of the 6947th Scty Sqdn, was responsible for supplying the personnel, but with the uncertainty surrounding the reconfiguration funding actions, the command could not make solid plans until all facts were known. Under these circumstances, USAFSS told the 6940th Scty Wg that it would have to work out such problems that arose in connection with manning.⁹

Lack of Money Cuts Modifications

(S Meanwhile, engineers had been working out the

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configuration they wanted in TALL TOM for operations. As almost always, they planned for what they wanted rather than what was basically needed in the modification. This was nothing unusual, as there was always a span between the two levels. In this case it backfired, and AFLC said on 8 February 1963, that there was not enough money to do everything. Consequently, the sights had to be lowered somewhat.¹⁰ Under any circumstances, it would be some weeks before anything would be done and the command had to continue in its efforts to from day to day.

(TS , Late in 1962,

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So USAFSS immediately advised TAC of the proposed change and asked it to coordinate with the JCS to begin flying as soon as STRAWBRIDGE returned for duty.¹⁵

TAC Asks For BLUE MOON Coverage

(TS) Tactical Air Command, on 1 March 1963, dropped another requirement on the hard-pressed MacDill AFB detachment. Specifically, TAC asked for

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USAFSS immediately asked TAC if this could be done.¹⁶

(TS The command, trying to get all the things done required of it, continued to scramble. During this time, it was still trying to work out the troubles in the ground support equipment for the ULD-1 in TALL TOM, and was having some success. But by the middle of March, was becoming concerned about the delay in receiving processed from the TALL TOM flights.¹⁷

The command explained that during this particular period it had to consider TALL TOM as bonus, because the ground processing equipment was being de-bugged, and this was the cause for delay. The ground equipment had not been used for many months, but USAFSS told on 12 March that it thought everything was pretty

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well worked out and timely should come soon.¹⁸

U-2 Flights Increased

(TS

was concerned, and this required two aircraft. But when BRASS KNOB was flying every day, that was how often had to fly. During this period, TALL TOM was put into full test operation to contribute as much as possible.¹⁷ In fact, the command was putting up everything available nearly all the time.¹⁹

(S On 20 March 1963, USAF approved funds to modify TALL TOM to make it a full partner in Cuban operations.²⁰ The command immediately huddled to decide just when the plane should go to TEMCO for the work. It came up with a 29 April departure date. From 60 to 90 days from the time work started at the Greenville, Tex., plant would be required for the job.²¹ Getting the TALL TOM aircraft working to full advantage on the Cuban problem was of utmost

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importance to the command. It still wanted to return the PACAF aircraft to the Pacific as soon as possible. In the meantime, before it went to TEMCO, USAFSS asked go-ahead to schedule it along with SUN VALLEY II and STRAWBRIDGE already on the line. The agreed with the proposal.²²

Another C-130 Program

(S) The picture stabilized for almost a month before TAC, on the 19th of April, told the detachment that a technical order compliance on all C-130B's would have to be completed. This threw another wrench into the machinery and some close scheduling was necessary. TALL TOM would be at TEMCO until 10 July at least. The modification was structural and would take 360 man-hours for the inspection alone, to say nothing of the work. TAC set a deadline of 12 May, after which all unmodified C-130B's would be grounded until the TOC was finished. The command had its same problem of classification and the non-standard back end equipment in the aircraft. The detachment, under these circumstances, suggested to USAFSS that the TOC be done at TEMCO rather than at the TAC depot. Anticipating the problem, the detachment had already worked out a schedule with the TAC people at MacDill AFB to get the aircraft through the procedure as quickly as possible. Important here was the fact that the TALL TOM C-130 would be lost to the command during the entire period, so all of the shuffling had to take

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place between the SUN VALLEY II and STRAWBRIDGE C-130B's.²³

(TS) The potential danger was evident. The close TOC schedule, and the fact that the command's work had to be done in Texas rather than at the depot, built in a number of dangers; mainly that at some time during the weeks involved, the command could wind up with no aircraft to fly QUICK FOX. So, another stop gap was thrown into the program. The detachment suggested bringing back a C-130A STRAWBRIDGE from Europe temporarily. This would be absolutely necessary if the Navy could not offer any help with its BANANA BOAT* missions. At the time, the Navy said it would try, but did not know for sure it could do it.²⁴

Mission Tightens Bind

(TS) Regardless of what happened, the command was going to be in bad shape during this period. Then "dropped another bomb" by telling the command on 23 April that a

However, three days later the detachment told USAFSS that it could fly without interrupting routine flying.²⁶

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Haiti Further Compounds Trouble

agreed and wanted to fly the first test

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flight on 15 May. USAFSS said this could be done.³¹

(TS)) This assignment, however, added to the detachment's scheduling problems.

, and the command felt the Haitian operation should not interfere. Due to the short time until planned beginning, the command suggested that the first test flight be slipped until 17 May; with a second on the 21st. USAFSS also said it preferred the STRAWBRIDGE aircraft over the SUN VALLEY II because of its greater potential.³²

(TS)) Assuming that all of the suggestions would be approved, USAFSS sent two from Kelly AFB immediately. There was no need for extra

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6940th Scty Wg at Goodfellow AFB for guidance. The wing said the

In its effort to do all jobs, the 6947th Scty
Sqdn at Cudjoe Key told the detachment that if it slipped the

Good Luck This Time

(TS) As it happened, the solution was fairly simple and worked out well, but there was no guarantee that such luck would hold out. USAFSS directly needed a strong set of priorities for its many and varied mission assignments coming from different interested agencies.³⁶ While all of the schedules, and the requirements of the mission itself, were fully complied with, there was comparatively little chance of striking success because the was not at all well developed and

(S) Through all of this the command had, at times, just one aircraft. So, on 11 June, when the return of TALL TOM began to come closer, the detachment began to make arrangements to put it into action immediately. TAC said the C-130 would be back on 10 July, and the detachment asked for a position allocation order so it could start making operational plans.³⁸ At the same time, the detachment asked the 6947th Scty Sqdn for permission to fly five training missions on TALL TOM to check operators out on the ULD-1

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system.³⁹ Meanwhile, things continued to change. On 13 June, SAC told Hq 2nd Air Force, Barksdale AFB, La., that the U-2 BRASS KNOB base was being changed from Homestead AFB, Fla. (where the aircraft had been operating since the beginning) to the Louisiana base.⁴⁰

Still Silent

* Everything considered, several command members felt that the most logical explanation for the loss of

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TALL TOM Alone Capable

(TS) Meanwhile, the STRAWBRIDGE aircraft had been returned to the Pacific, leaving only the TALL TOM C-130B to

This period eventually extended into November so all of the missions could be flown, but there was still no immediate success. This failure was still the biggest thorn in the operation. Yet, only TALL TOM had the capability, so it had to be continued.⁴⁵

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Detachment Ready-And Successful

(S) Lt. Col. Robert Craig, director at Hq USAFSS, immediately called Capt. Robert James, detachment commander at MacDill AFB, and asked the chances of getting the mission off the next day. Captain James said this could be done if he had the

The wheels were put into motion. After talking to the 6940th Scty Wg at Goodfellow AFB and letting them know what was going on, Col. Craig called Fort Meade and told AFSSOP that the detachment people were ready to go.

AFSSOP said that

Early on the 27th, the detachment called the command and said it was ready to move.⁴⁸

(S) The QUICK FOX C-130 left MacDill AFB at 0530 on the 27th as scheduled, and the squadron -- not knowing just what

Over the next week, the detachment flew the required missions, but again, could not tell just how much good it was doing because the crews simply

On 12 October, however, they found that they had indeed done the job well.

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(TS) So the search went on through the rest of 1963. The mission had become routine in nature, though the availability of aircraft did at times create disruption. Plans were in the mill, however, to get specially configured C-130's for the Cuban problem, but these would not be available until sometime in 1964. In the meantime, they had to be drawn from overseas locations. This was becoming especially demanding in Southeast Asia, where the operations were beginning to pick up more and more. There were many proposals, counter-proposals, and ideas for that operation, which will be covered in another study to be completed by mid-1964. In Cuba, though the effort went on and on. In December 1963, the 6940th Scty Wg published the first operations order covering the program and outlined its specific responsibilities.

Emergency Eases

(TS) These, for the most part, represented the solidification of procedures that had been in effect over the months and proved simply that the operations of the detachment were less emergency than they had been in the past. The primary point remained that

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So, for the time being at least, as in the rest of the world, the airborne platforms would have to play a truly significant part in the

The detachment was still small, though it had grown somewhat over the 18 months of operation. At the end of December, 56 airmen and three officers were assigned, all holding operational specialties. All support was handled by other organizations or the parent unit, the 6947th Scty Sqdn at Key West, Fla.

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Chapter IV

An Historical Analysis

Here, as in any "current" historical study, it is professionally dangerous to attempt a conclusive historical analysis of the situation. Yet, such is the inherent responsibility of contemporary historians. From a professional standpoint, the historian has been compared to the doctor in at least one particular example. When a patient goes to a doctor for a physical examination, a full report is expected--complete with analysis, diagnosis, conclusions, recommendations, etc.--based on the physician's professional knowledge and experience.

Sometimes the doctor, as well as the historian, is wrong. If he is doubtful, he can tell the patient to come back in six weeks for another examination, or he can send the individual to a specialist. Similar avenues are open to the historian. He can say wait six months or a year for the next history on this situation, and he can say consider this history only in light of related information and of histories of the same situation written by other units, agencies, services, etc. We would like to take advantage of both of these avenues. In exercising our prerogative, as well as our responsibility, we have attempted to analyze the data gathered and to present some conclusions that resulted. To that end, we offer this chapter.

Cuban Influence Spreads

The year 1963 was of great concern to the United States, as well

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as to the non-Communist oriented factions of the entire Western Hemisphere. President Kennedy's Alliance for Progress for development of economies in Latin America faced crisis after crisis in one small nation after another. That Castro's Cuba became the hub for the spread of subversion throughout the area could not be successfully contested as confirming evidence continued to pop up from one time and one place to another.

The exact amount of direct Soviet influence in these developments could not be isolated. But Cuba did not have the means before the Crisis came up. Afterward she did. Where there was no local base for the promulgation of subversion before, by the end of 1963 there was. The Organization of American States (OAS) still did not have the authority or cohesion to be a strong factor in marshalling forces against subversion. American industry, while making substantial profits for themselves, had aided greatly over the years in developing South American resources, but they were again put under governmental pressures to give up their investments and properties.

Still Many Intangibles

Where all this would lead it was too early to say at the end of 1963. There were simply too many intangibles to consider; and it would probably be some time before the roots of the initial developments really began to sprout. Unquestionably, however, active Communism grew rapidly following the Cuban crisis. Where there

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had been isolated, and more or less individual revolutionary moves against established governments in the past, they now appeared stronger and more widely organized. The only logical answer, of course, was Cuba. The need for the U.S. effort against Cuba, therefore, was obvious.

The USAFSS units at Cudjoe Key and MacDill AFB were there to stay. The effort would not get any smaller, and there was every chance that it would grow in size and scope. Latin America, for the most part, stayed in a turmoil through 1963, and there was no sign of letup. Overt U.S. action against Communist inspired insurrection was impossible to predict. But nowhere in the world was there a more potentially explosive situation; and nowhere in the world was the geographical location of more critical concern to this nation.

Assassination of President Kennedy

President John F. Kennedy's assassination on 22 November 1963 added foreboding uncertainty to the political situation in the Western Hemisphere. Military authorities were anxious, wondering just which way the Communists would turn. Fortunately, former vice president Lyndon B. Johnson, who ascended to the presidency, took hold of the diplomatic reins immediately and seemed, at the end of 1963, even more concerned with Latin American affairs than did his predecessor. His naming, in December 1963, of Thomas Mann as

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Assistant Secretary of State for InterAmerican Affairs showed more than anything else his determination to solidify this area politically and diplomatically.

Bolivia-Venezuela

In Latin America, tension continued through the end of the year. In Bolivia, a group of tin miners held American businessmen hostage in demand for the release of Communist political prisoners by the Bolivian government. In Caracas, Venezuela, Communist subversive elements resorted to the threat of open bloodshed trying to keep Venezuelans from the polls. These actions were not eminently successful for the Communists, but it clearly revealed the smoking bomb that lay beneath the troubled surface. The U.S. could assume that any concerted action that eventually took place by Communist forces would have to take place with the tacit consent of Soviet Russia through Fidel Castro's Cuba. The Soviets showed in Cuba that they would supply all the necessities, including arms, personnel, equipment,

The backward condition of all the nations under consideration made it almost impossible to build up a working on any of the areas. Under these conditions, the command had to assume certain things would happen.

A Better Look at Latin America

Consequently, both the 6947th Scty Sqdn in Florida and the 6945th

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Scty Sqdn at Goodfellow AFB, San Angelo, Tex., were involved in

but other nations were potentially critical. During 1963, USAFSS put forth a mass of effort toward getting an organization developed to handle the assignments already in-being and those that might develop.

Panama

As 1964 opened, tension struck again--this time in Panama. The development there showed the opportunistic nature of subversive operations when there was organization. There had been much discontent in past years between the natives of the territory of Panama and the American citizens inhabiting the U.S. Canal Zone. There was a great difference in the social stature of the two groups: the Panamanians having much the same standard of living as the rest of South and Central America, and the "Zonians", as the American segment was called, living extremely well. As a matter of fact, many were second and third generation in the Zone.

Even as time wore on there was no evidence that Communists had actually perpetrated the crisis. It started when a group of Zone high school students raised the American flag at their school in violation of a Zone order. The order resulted from disagreements about just where the Republic of Panama flag would fly in the Zone. (In 1956 President Eisenhower had agreed it could fly alongside the

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Stars and Stripes at some places within the American territory).

Communists in Evidence

Panamanian students then demonstrated and the Communist agitators (it was later proved that there were some on the scene immediately) took immediate advantage of the situation. Days of street fighting and bloodshed followed; and at the end of January, although officials of both nations had gotten together in a very strained atmosphere for talks, the proverbial "powder keg" still had a short fuse. The significant point was that prior to Cuba, the Communists had no such organization spread throughout Latin America to take such immediate advantage of a break like this. Cuba, of course, was the base of operation for the malignant spread of Communism in Latin America.

Taking a long look at the struggle between the forces and influences of the East and West, the world was coming to a point of critical tension, reports to the contrary notwithstanding. In Southeast Asia, India, Pakistan, Africa, and anywhere else where the chorus of "nationalism" had been raised, the Communists were there working hard. There were also continuing signs that the Western alliance was not nearly as secure as it could have been. This split was more economic than military, but the result was nearly the same. It appeared that only in crises would the free world friends band together. The biggest break in this respect came in January 1964

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Initially, the stress had been on maintaining an emergency operation, but the thinking began to point toward an extended operation. These developments made it even more difficult to perform the basic mission with the limited facilities. At the same time, of course, NSA was interested in adding as much as possible to its

Cuba A Bed of Controversy

Among government leaders there seemed to be a wide variety of opinions and recommendations -- perhaps even more than usual because of the approaching presidential election year of 1964. Seldom in the history of the U.S. has there been so much controversy among government leaders concerning a particular development. Many of the charges and countercharges were, in fact, blistering. The basic dissident appeared to be: Why didn't the government act sooner than

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it did in the pre-crisis days of the Soviet buildup in Cuba? It was essentially true that

The intent here is not to evaluate the evidence, but to show the ammunition used by members of the dissident factions in criticizing certain U.S. actions and policies. Such leaks (and there were some in Washington) created a rash of vehement protests to the government for "manipulating" news to the American public. This issue was a popular whipping boy in the daily press for several months after the declaration of the "crisis" in Cuba.

By the beginning of 1963 the crisis from a military standpoint, had begun to abate, as the Soviets, ostensibly at least, removed offensive weapons from Cuba. But the controversy continued. On 14 January 1963, retired General Thomas D. White, former Air Force Chief of Staff, said in a national magazine:²

. . . I find it especially difficult to understand why our military authorities did not raise the alarm long before October. In my opinion, and I spent many years in the intelligence business, there

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was enough information to be found in the daily press alone to have led to a military conclusion that the Russians in Cuba were posing a serious threat to the U.S.

General White went on to say that he felt the stream of Russian ships to Cuba, which began in the summer of 1962, should have aroused deep suspicion. He asked "could anyone in uniform really have believed that the construction in Havana harbor was for a 'fishing fleet'?" He continued.³

Did the evaluators of Soviet intelligence, who should be chosen for their cynicism, actually give credence to published reports that thousands of Russian troops in Cuba were there for peaceful purposes or that the U.S.S.R. would mount such an effort merely to arm Fidel Castro with defensive missiles? Was not the sum total of indicators enough to raise the alarm long before it was raised?

* * * * *

It bothers me also to know that the equipment for launching and guiding certain types of missiles can be hidden readily and that some missiles and aircraft themselves can be transported piece-meal and quickly reassembled. These factors and other clandestine capabilities of the U.S.S.R. in Cuba, lead me to believe that as long as there is a Communist government in Cuba, the U.S. and all of Latin America are in jeopardy. Our naivete in believing otherwise has brought us close to a major disaster.

(TS Moreover, although Russia agreed to--and in fact did--remove these weapons, the Soviet influence continued to build.

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While more or less irrefutable evidence of Russia's determination to remain in Cuba continued to be apparent, economic and political developments on the island were subject to a good deal of prognostication. While the government of Fidel Castro was getting more solidly Communist, press reports continued to herald the economic shortcomings of the socialist government. There were many rumblings among the exiles in Florida, but at the end of 1963 there was no evidence of any concerted action toward revolution. The expatriation of the veterans of the Bay of Pigs invasion and their families from Cuba was complete and the U.S. government continued to sympathize with them without offering any overt aid.

The growing revolutionary actions in other Latin American countries, however, showing clear evidence of Red infiltration, was

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the most significant clue as to the political importance of the Soviet takeover in Cuba. Mao Tse Tung continued to woo the Cubans, and found considerable sympathy for his doctrine. Never before in its history had the Western Hemisphere been as closely exposed to an outside influence as during this period. The Red Chinese had much backing, from the standpoint of philosophy, among Cuban Communists. Ernesto (Che) Gueverra, who many called the real power behind the Cuban revolution, was in agreement that armed revolution was the key to Communist victory.

But Russia still held the solid upper hand at the end of 1963. This was due, of course, to the fact that Khrushcheyv was supplying the means for Cuba to exist, and Castro could hardly bite the hand that fed him. Around the world, the Chinese-Soviet doctrinal battle raged, but this was an in-house fight and in no way changed the basic Communist philosophy of eventual world domination by one form or another. The two Communist giants battled the world over in newly "liberated" nations, particularly in Africa, where the Soviets were very active. From a purely historical standpoint, 1963 was just another year in the struggle between free and enslaved peoples, the big difference being that this time it was in the back yard of the United States and the rest of the Western Hemisphere.

At the Year's End

(TS) To draw conclusions from the first full year's operations

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Yet,

one thing was obvious from the beginning--as it has been in other emergency USAFSS operations--the supply and personnel lines of the command were spread perilously thin from top to bottom. This was not so specifically the case in the ground effort from an equipmental standpoint as it was in the airborne effort, but it was there nonetheless.

(TS) During the entire year the efforts were plagued with a constant levy of requirements from several agencies--each having its own peculiar interest. The command was caught in the middle because it was equipped primarily to handle only a limited mission. A major factor, also, was the fact that Cuba, with its

There could have been little speculation two years earlier that this comparatively insignificant island would have the advanced it possessed at the end of 1963. Fortunately, it was of

Nonetheless, it was quite advanced and difficult to cope with--particularly with the emergency-type

(TS) Only the portion could and here the availability of aircraft was a key factor. That the command had the amount of success it did, must be

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attributed to a great extent to the calibre of people associated not only with the portion itself, but with the flying and maintenance of the aircraft as well.

(TS) One thing was certain. Within a two-year period, the command had become involved in two gigantic emergency efforts; Cuba and Southeast Asia. Both had led to tremendous expenditures in time, personnel, and money. While the Cuba effort, being operated within the confines of the United States, went quite smoothly, the Southeast Asia effort was still locked in great difficulties. With the Communists there operating mostly from a basis of "brush fire" actions, the command had more of this to look forward to. Consequently, much importance had to be attached to the development of emergency concepts.

(TS) An emergency airborne operation was almost certainly in the mill. It had the greatest mobility and the most highly developed capability to handle those generally associated with air activity. But this was a tremendously expensive operation. In most cases, aircraft simply were not available for the command's needs. The C-141 was the only Air Force transport aircraft in production and using commands were not at all eager to release airframes suitable for So there were several stumbling blocks in the months ahead.

(TS) As to the political situation in the Western Hemisphere,

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there wasn't really a pinpoint of light anywhere. Once the Communists established a foothold in Cuba, activity snowballed. In Venezuela, for just one example, weapons and ammunition presumably from Cuba (Cuban manufacturing marks were reportedly on them) were uncovered. This led to an OAS denunciation of Fidel Castro, but little else. In the past, Cuba did not have this potential. The hope of an internal revolution in the iron-bound Cuban society was, on several occasions, discounted as a possibility.

Several times through the year, it had appeared that there might be some dissention between Castro and Khrushchev. However, early in 1964 when Castro made a quick trip to Russia, following the controversy in Panama, all seemed to be peaches and cream between the two Communist bosses. Further, it appeared through

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If there was any real conclusion developed during the span, it was confirmation of a fact that had been in the minds of many beforehand-- Americans (both North and South) were no longer by themselves in their hemisphere of the world. Where communism had been an irritating thorn in the side of U.S. observers for years, it now was a very real thing, and would have to be handled that way. Where USAFSS in the past had operated only a fragmented effort

this would have to grow. For planning purposes, every location south of the border was a potential new stronghold for Communist interests.

The initial success of the program before and during the crisis period--and over the months afterward--apparently made an indelible impression on the appropriate authorities, because plans were soon under way for developing an specifically for the problem. This capability was not due for some months, but when it came, the Cuban problem would at last have tailor-made facilities, to a certain degree at least.

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On the ground, USAFSS would simply have to operate as in previous emergencies and crises: Probe, try, experiment, and sometimes guess, to find the answers. There were few pat answers anywhere in the business, and everything was constantly subject to change.

There was one thing accomplished--probably as the result of both 1962 ERU deployments (one to Florida and one to Southeast Asia). This was the development of a completely new emergency operations plan, which went a great deal further afield than had anything in the past. One thing was patently visible in the initial concepts. The command was going to have to consider more thoroughly the methods of operations of the potential enemy, rather than building on its own ideas alone. This came out in the initial prognostications as the recommendations ran the gamut from advanced airborne potentials to the very basic and perhaps primitive method of back-packing equipment. The latter concept had a long way to go, but certainly the thoughts were in the minds of planners.

Although the command had continued over the years to try to develop those things it needed, the emphasis (primarily because of funding and national requirements) had to be placed on covering the general armed forces development of the major actions. But Cuba, along with other trouble spots in the past, proved conclusively that the effort had to go further. The developments themselves

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were time consuming and many times very expensive for products that for the most part couldn't be laid out on the table with the statement that ". . .this is what we've done." Much of it was very elusive in character, but of a highly critical importance if it wasn't available when needed. Proving this and developing the best ways to do it was the problem of the command in days ahead.

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